

Electronic Filing News

Be Careful When Using Electronic Redaction

With the E-Government Act of 2002 in effect, the redaction of personal data identifiers from all civil pleadings is now a necessity. When redacting information, be careful of the method being used.

A redacted Department of Justice document released under the Freedom of Information Act was converted back to the full unmodified document and made available on the Internet. Sections of the document were redacted using the highlighting function of a word processing system to overlay sections with black highlighting (black highlighting over black text hides the text). The redacted document was converted to a PDF document. Since neither the highlighting nor the conversion to the PDF format overwrote the original text, removing the highlighting to reveal



the hidden text was very simple.

In another instance, CIA documents published by the New York Times were redacted by overlaying a black box on entire paragraphs of text. On slower computers the document, in its entirety, appeared on the screen first and the black box appeared seconds later, allowing viewers a quick peak at the text. Even on fast computers, using tools available within the full version of Adobe, a viewer could simply remove the overlay.

One solution is to use Appligent's Redax software. It is a plug-in to Adobe Acrobat 4.0 and higher and allows users to easily and permanently delete information from PDF documents. The U.S. Department of Justice has implemented Redax in seven different divisions, including the U.S. Attorney's office.

Adobe Acrobat 6.0

If you install Acrobat 6.0 Standard or Professional, you must change the settings to make your PDF documents compatible with prior versions.

The District Court clerk's office has tested Adobe Acrobat 6.0 and finds that it is compatible with CM/ECF. However, PDF documents created with Acrobat 6.0 cannot always be read by lower versions of Acrobat. Therefore, if you install Acrobat 6.0 Standard or Professional versions, you must change the settings to make your PDF documents com-

patible with prior versions. More information on Adobe 6.0 and instructions for changing the default settings can be found on our web site at <http://www.ned.uscourts.gov/cmecf/>, under Reference Materials.

Before installing any new version of Adobe Acrobat, it is important to completely uninstall prior versions.

PDF Websites

Redax by Appligent

<http://www.appligent.com/> A plug-in for Adobe Acrobat that is designed to completely remove text and scanned images from PDF documents.

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